Palmyree

Lk.21:19 In your patience ye shall win your souls.

Jackie Coogan playing the violin, putting soul into his music. The soul of poetry. He put his whole soul into his work.

"God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul." The soul of man, as distingusihed from the rest of him, and which distinguishes man from the rest of the animal creation.

I. The origin of the soul.

The conception of the soul as the immortal part of man. Concerning it theologians are divided into two camps, called Creationists and Traducianists.

The Creationist believes that man is not born with a soul but that God creates for him his soul, as he did for Adam. Every soul, then is a new creation.

The traducianist believes that man inherits his soul from his parents, being born with it, else, how can you account not only for the physical characteristics of the parents in the child but the moral and spiritual qualities as well.

There is truth in both of these theories. Every man is indeed a new creation, no other exactly like him. On the other hand, we do inherit traits and tendencies from parents.

But the danger of both these theories is that the soul is regarded as a finished product, as somethigg completed. When it comes to the making of a soul the chief factor is neither God nor parents, but the man himself. For the soul is not given, but made. It is not inherited at birth but has to be fought for and won.

The soul is the prize of living. It is the great reward that crowns the courage and loyalty of the man who fights the good fight. "By your patient endurance ye shall win for yourselves souls".

II. Losing the soul.

The idea of winning a soul implies that a soul may b be lost. The Bible not only says so but experience teaches the same thing. I dont have in mind the losing of a soul for eternity, but the losing of a soul here and now.

There are men and women who have little if any soul. There are many who have less soul now than they did years ago. Like every other faculty of our being, the soul grows by exercise and nourishment, but atrophies and

perishes thru disuse and neglect.

How does the soul live? On what does the soul feed? "My soul," cries the psalmist, " is athirst for God, the living God." "I", said Jesus, "am the bread of life." That is how the soul lives, by fellowship with God, by feeding upon Christ; by reproducing the life he lived, by kindness and love and sacrifice; by giving the utmost to the highest; by seeking what is lovely and true and pure and of good report.

But when we forget God, when we neglect Christ, when we live for self and the world and sin, we impoverish and destroy the soul. And it is so easy to do this very thing To go down is easier than to go up. To live physically, in just an animal way is much easier than conquering our flesh and living in the spirit.

Jesus in the parable of the sower indicates how the soul is lost. "These are they that have heard, and as they go on their way, they are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life". And what is it that is choked? Not the man himself- apparently he is as much alive as ever- but his soul that is choked, stifled, strangled, destroyed.

Saul at the beginning gave promise of being a royal soul. He resolved to glorify God. But when he was made king and the responsibilities of his position weighed heavily upon him he turned from God and went to the with of Endor instead. And Saul became a lost soul. how often the cares of this life undermine our faith and make us subject to superstition and fear. The soul "choked with cares."

Likewise Mammon is a deadly enemy of the soul. The number is legion whose souls have been choked by riches. Judas at one time gave promise of becoming a great soul. As a disciple of Christ at first he was enthusiastic and earnest. But the love of money gradually got hold of his heart, and little by little he squeezed his soul until he choked it to death, finally scoffing at Mary's ointment sacrifice and selling his Lord and Master for thirty pieces of silver. "Choked- with riches".

When the prodical son was spending his substance in rioteous living, Jesus said that his soul was lost. Selfishness and sin had eaten it up. He had no soul left.

Selfish and sensual pleasure always does dry up and destroy the soul. It kills all high feeling in a man, all noble ambition and holy aspiration. It de-humanizes and brutalizes a man. It puts the mark of the beast upon a man's face. "Choked- with pleasures."

III. Gaining the Soul.

But it is not our intention to speak about losing our souls. Our theme is the making of a soul, the gaing of a soul. We have seen how a man, in the process of life may lose his soul, how at the close of his live he may h have less soul than at the beginning, or he may have no soul at all.

By what process, then, can a man gain for himself a soul so that in his old age he may have more soul, may become great- souled?

I. First of all, by taking God into his life, by practicigg the presence of God. The soul thrives and lives by fellowship with God. Jesus said, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered." Apart from God the soul cannot thrige. As a branch severed from the main trunk withers and dies, so the soul, disconnected from God shriverls and dies.

If you want to gain soul, to grow soul, live in the atmosphere of the eternal, practice the presence of God, be instant in prayer. Men of prayer, men who have communed with God have always ~~been~~ gained for themselves souls.

2.By following Christ. By imitating Christ. Never sacrifice the higher for the lower. Be true and loyal to the best. Follow Christ. Live for love and the good you can do. Always choose the right way, no matter how hard.

James Smetham, the artist. Thot highly of by Ruskin and Rosetti. Could have been a fashionable portrait painter and consequently a rich man, but he he resolved that nothing but the highest and the best should ever come from his brush. He died a poor man but he gained for himself an artistic soul.

A man of business was being pressed to do what he believed to be dishonorable. "Everyone does it" he was told. "Are those the only conditions on which I can get the order?" he asked. "Yes, they are," he was told. "Then I must do without it, I have a conscience to live with." He lost the order but he gained that which was

worth infinitely more to him- he gained soul.

The ultimate failure or triumph of life is not to be measured in terms of riches or power: the measure of life is soul. How much so ul have you got? Are you ~~neglecting your soul~~ exercising your soul or are you neglecting it? Are you feeding your soul or are you choking it? What is your main interest in life- possessions and pleasure, or God? Following your own selfish inclinations of following Christ? Is your soul for sale? Are the ptincipees of right living worth more to you than an increase of business or a social standing?